

Message Text

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ACTION SCI-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 NASA-04 SS-14 PM-09 EB-11 OST-04

OTP-02 NSC-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00 PA-03

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TAGS: TSPS, OVIP, FR

SUBJECT: NASA ADMINISTRATOR CALL ON SCIENCE MINISTER CHARONNEL

REF: STATE 40957

1. SUMMARY: DR. FLETCHER'S CALL ON CHARBONNEL REVEALED CONTINUING FRENCH SATISFACTION WITH US- FRENCH SPACE PROGRAMS. CHARBONNEL TOOK NOTE OF FRENCH DECISION IN PRINCIPLE PARTICIPATE IN SPACELAB, BUT SAID FIRM FRENCH COMMITMENT DEPENDS ON RESOLUTION EUROPEAN LAUNCHER QUESTION. DR. FLETCHER INVITED CHARBONNEL TO MAY 14 LAUNCH OF SKYLAB. END SUMMARY.

2. MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL AND SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT JEAN CHARBONNEL RECEIVED DR. FLETCHER, MARCH 15, IN FRIENDLY, RELAXED ATMOSPHERE. DR. FLETCHER EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH EXTENSIVE US- FRENCH COOPERATIVE SPACE EFFORTS TO DATE AND HIS DESIRE SEE FRANCE PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN EUROPEAN POST- APOLLO PROJECT SPACELAB. CHARBONNEL SAID HE TOO IS SATISFIED WITH PAST SPACE COOPERATION AND IS CONVINCED THAT IT WILL INCREASE. CONCEDED THAT ENTHUSIASM FOR SPACELAB IS NOT AS GREAT IN FRANCE AS IN OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, CHARBONNEL SAID FRANCE AGREED IN PRINCIPLE LAST DECEMBER TO PARTICIPATE IN SPACELAB, BUT THAT SPECIFICS OF ITS PARTICIPATION
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DEPEND ON RESOLUTION OF EUROPEAN LAUNCHER (L3 S) QUESTION. DR. FLETCHER EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH FAVORABLE FRENCH DECISION IN PRINCIPLE ON SPACELAB, RECOGNIZED THE EUROPEAN CHARACTER OF THE L3 S LAUNCHER QUESTION. LEVY REMARKED THAT THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF FRENCH COMMITMENT TO SPACELAB AND EUROPEAN PARTICIPATION IN L3 S LAUNCHER WAS AMONG ISSUES HE EXPLAINED IN RECENT TESTIMONY BEFORE US CONGRESS.

3. DR. FLETCHER DESCRIBED BRIEFLY THE ADVANTAGES AND OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY OF THE SPACE SHUTTLE AND SAID THAT, AS RESULT OF ITS LOWER OPERATIONAL COST, US PLANS TO PHASE OUT EXPENDABLE LAUNCHERS WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION SCOUT. HOWEVER, HE SAID THERE MIGHT ALWAYS BE NEED FOR A SPECIAL PURPOSE LAUNCHER TO MEET SPECIFIC SET OF REQUIREMENTS, TO WHICH CHARBONNEL NODDED ASSENT.

4. NOTING WITH SATISFACTION PRESENCE OF FRENCH EXPERIMENT IN SKYLAB PLANNED FOR LAUNCH MAY 14, DR. FLETCHER INVITED CHARBONNEL TO ATTEND LAUNCH OF THIS LAST SATURN-5 VEHICLE. ALTHOUGH OBVIOUSLY PLEASED BY INVITATION, CHARBONNEL REMARKED THAT HE MIGHT NO LONGER HOLD SCIENCE PORTFOLIO IN NEW GOVERNMENT TO BE FORMED EARLY APRIL. DR. FLETCHER THEN EXTENDED INVITATION ON PERSONAL BASIS TO COVER THAT EVENTUALITY. LEVY COMMENTED PRIVATELY FOLLOWING THIS CALL THAT IF CHARBONNEL DOES NOT REMAIN AS SCIENCE MINISTER, THERE IS GOOD CHANCE HE MIGHT MOVE BACK TO FORMER RESPONSIBILITIES AS HEAD, FINANCE COMMITTEE IN ASSEMBLEE.

5. DR. FLETCHER DREW CHARBONNEL ATTENTION TO PIONEER- VENUS PROJECT NOW IN PLANNING STAGES AND MENTIONED THAT THIS WILL BE NEXT LARGE NASA PROGRAM IN WHICH SIGNIFICANT FRENCH PARTICIPATION WILL BE POSSIBLE. LEVY SAID THAT PLANETARY INTEREST IS GROWING IN FRENCH SCIENTIFIC CIRCLES, ESPECIALLY AMONG GEOLOGISTS INTERESTED IN APPLYING TO EARTH- PHYSICS THEORY LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM PLANETARY STRUCTURES.

6. DESCRIBING REMARKABLE PHOTOGRAPHS OF MARS FROM MARINER-9, DR. FLETCHER NOTED INCREASING PUBLIC INTEREST IN SPACE APPLICATIONS; FOR EXAMPLE, EARTH PHOTOGRAPHS OF EFFECTS OF POLLUTION, MAN' S ALTERATION OF EARTH PROCESSES, AND EARTH FRACTURE PATTERNS REVEALING POTENTIAL MINERAL DEPOSITS. TO CHARBONNEL' S OBVIOUS SATISFACTION, FLETCHER MENTIONED PROPHETIC NATURE OF NOVELIST JULES VERNE' S ACCURATE FORECAST OF SEQUENCE OF SPACE EXPLORATION.

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7. CLOSING MEETING, CHARBONNEL COMMENTED THAT OUTCOME OF RECENT

FRENCH ELECTIONS ASSURES THAT FRENCH SPACE PROGRAM WILL CONTINUE UNCHANGED AND MADE POINT THAT DEFEAT OF LEFT COALITION ASSURES THAT FUTURE FRENCH SPACE COOPERATION WILL BE PRINCIPALLY WITH US AND NOT WITH USSR.

8. TIME PREVENTED COORDINATION THIS MESSAGE WITH DR. FLETCHER PRIOR HIS DEPARTURE.

9. COMMENT: CHARBONNEL SHOWED KEEN INTEREST THROUGHOUT IN DR. FLETCHER' S LOW- KEY, BUT HIGHLY EFFECTIVE DESCRIPTION OF IMPACT OF US SHUTTLE DEVELOPMENT ON EXPENDABLE LAUNCHER INVENTORY. NOTE THAT CHARBONNEL TENURE AS MINISTER DATES ONLY FROM FORMATION MESSMER CABINET, THAT HE HAD NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN SPACE OR OTHER TECHNICAL FIELDS. INVITATION TO US, THEREFORE HIGHLY APPROPRIATE.
IRWIN

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